



Arlington Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: July 14, 2021.

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes. [DRAFT]

1. Administration.

Members in Attendance: Dan Amstutz (DPCD), Wayne Chouinard (DPW), Lenard Diggins, Ray Jones, Melissa Laube, Howard Muise, Tycho Nightingale, Scott Smith, Laura Swan (Chair), and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: Jeff Maxtutis, Corey Rateau (APD)

Members of Public in Attendance: Petru Sofio and Joe Solomon.

The Chair read the script for remotely conducted meetings, referred the members to the agenda attachment entitled "Governor Charles Baker's 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law," announced that the meeting was being recorded and reviewed the meeting ground rules.

B. Approval of June 9, 2021 Meeting Notes.

Minutes of the June 9, 2021, meeting were approved.

C. Correspondence Sent/Received from June 3, 2021 to July 9, 2021.

- Memo dated June 14, 2021 East Arlington Livable Streets Coalition (EALS) to Select Board RE: Mitigation for loss of Mass Ave/Lafayette bump out for priority bus lane.

In response to Len Diggins, Dan Amstutz said that the Town Manager responded to EALS. The Town is investigating engaging a design firm to address unsignalized crosswalks along the stretch of Mass Ave in East Arlington, with particular attention to the bump out removed at Lafayette Street for the bus-rapid

transit (BRT) lane. Howard Muise added that DPW is examining adding better overhead lighting for this crosswalk.

D. Change of membership

Laura Swan made the following announcements about membership:

- Michael Barry (Associate Member) has resigned.
- Howard Muise has resigned as Chair but will continue on the TAC as a Member at Large for the next few months.
- Laura Swan was elected the TAC Chair at the June meeting.

2. Public Comments.

There were no public comments.

3. Town Issues/Activities.

A. Wayne Chouinard provided an update from the Department of Public Works (DPW):

Continuation of capital work for roads, pavement preservation, and accessibility: Bates Road has been completed. Sidewalk and accessibility improvements are being made on Bates Rd, Adams St, Allen St, Raleigh St, and Andrew St. Rubber chip seal project will begin on Summer St, Mystic, Oakhill Dr. Crack seal crews now working in Town. Curb ramp contract completed near Thompson School on River St; now full ramp accessibility from Mystic Valley Parkway to Warren St.

B. Dan Amstutz provided an update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD).

Connect Arlington will go to Select Board on Monday for its endorsement. The Connect Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan will be available on the DPCD webpage.

New Assistant Director for DPCD is Erin Moriarty, who replaces Erin Zwirko.

MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces: the Town will receive \$50,000 for parklet furnishings (seating, umbrellas, and plantings).

MBTA Better Bus Project, Bus Network Redesign Survey is now available. The project seeks to examine the bus system “from the ground up” to design a draft network that works well given trip demand, frequency, and equity. The goal is to

improve the bus system as a true alternative to personal automobile. MBTA will discuss the possible system changes with municipalities first. After feedback, it will unveil the plan to the public later this year.

Minuteman Bikeway Planning Project: This is a CPA-funded project, and the Town will be selecting a consultant next week.

C. There was no update from the Police Department (APD).

4. Chestnut Street Traffic Calming.

Select Board: Howard Muise, Jeff Maxtutis, and Dan Amstutz presented the TAC recommendations on Chestnut St Traffic Calming to the Select Board. The Select Board approved the TAC recommendations to implement enhanced safety improvements for the crosswalks at Chestnut Terrace and Medford Street, and improve conditions for people walking and bicycling. One issue is how to fund more expensive items such as the RRFB/Pedestrian Flashing Beacon. Goal is for less expensive measures to be implemented quickly.

Ray Jones asked about the process to obtain funding for expensive items such as RRFB. Howard Muise responded that DPW or another department could request money specifically for certain items for the Finance Committee to put them into the Town Budget.

Dan Amstutz added that approximately \$200,000 per year is available for Town-wide mobility improvements; the Arlington Center sidewalk project used some funding from this account. Complete Streets Funding Program might also be used. Wayne Chouinard noted that the mobility improvements account is in the Town Manager account.

5. Update: Lower Washington St

Melissa Laube emailed the Working Group outlining additional areas of analysis and approaches for moving this to conclusion. Presently analyzing signage and effect of one-way operation on traffic, in particular cut-thru traffic. Petru Sofio inquired how bicycles and pedestrians might be affected. Melissa Laube responded that bicycles and pedestrians would be permitted two-way access.

Wayne Chouinard urged caution on setting precedents on private ways. DPW has "Betterment Process" (through the Select Board Office) to guide private way abutters for roadway improvements. Presently, DPW is working with the Mt. Gilboa private road group, and the project will soon go out to bid. Laura Swan added that the Betterment Process came up at the last Select Board Meeting. Town Counsel informed the Select Board that the Town legally cannot assist in

developing or paying for improvements on private ways. Melissa Laube will follow up with Wayne Chouinard to discuss the Betterment Process.

6. Update: Mass Ave at Appleton St

Dan Amstutz said there was a meeting last Thursday. Green International provided revised concepts that were discussed by the Design Review Committee. The Committee voted for "Option #2", which includes bike lanes on both sides of Mass Ave between Lowell St and Forest St. Presently, DPCD is setting up a meeting between DPW and Green International to discuss how to advance Option #2 before moving it to the Select Board.

Laura Swan asked whether APD still is banning left turns during certain hours. Dan Amstutz responded that APD will continue the left-turn ban during certain hours. Petru Sofio responded that APD now is enforcing left-turn ban from 4:30pm – 7:30 pm. He asked about funding for short-term improvements. Dan Amstutz responded that there are development projects and MassWorks, from which funding might be used for more expensive improvements such as a traffic signal. The intersection meets 3 of 5 MUTCD traffic signal warrants.

7. Park Ave at Appleton St

Laura Swan inquired on the status of funding for the study on a potential traffic signal.

Wayne Chouinard had no update; he will look to see which department received the assigned funds and see their plan. Howard Muise advised to check with the the Town Manager, who provided the go ahead for the study. Len Diggins responded that the Town Manager is talking to the DPW Director.

Joe Solomon noted that this is an opportunity with the Boston MPO to suggest intersections for quick-fix solutions such as adjusting or adding pavement markings. He will recommend this intersection for the process.

Separately, Joe Solomon informed the TAC of a possible effect of the left-turn ban at Mass Ave and Appleton. Joe Solomon and Petru Sofio conducted counts between 4:30 – 5 :30pm, which showed that many left-turning vehicles from Mass Ave onto Appleton are arriving at the Park Ave and Appleton St intersection. Shoji Takahashi mentioned these observations demonstrate the importance of traffic analysis for the Park Ave corridor as discussed at previous TAC Meetings, particularly as new developments such as 1165R Mass Ave are being constructed.

Len Diggins asked if the observations included any close calls, which might indicate a problem. Joe Solomon and Petru Sofio responded that there are many instances of red-light running at the Mass Ave and Appleton St intersection.

Petru Sofio asked if there are discussions about short-term measures or strategies. Howard Muise responded that the Working Group was having difficulty identifying short-term remedies such as painted bump outs. Wayne Chouinard had done draft sketches for curb extensions. The curb extensions do not solve the turning conflict; they do improve the situation for pedestrians.

8. Update: Speed Enforcement in Crosby St. Neighborhood

Shoji Takahashi updated that APD had looked at internal traffic data such as citations, speeding, crash data. Given the traffic data, APD has concluded that it is not necessary to collect traffic counts on Crosby St. Working Group requested past traffic count data on Crosby St from Corey Rateau.

Laura Swan asked about the location of Crosby St, the Town line, and the location of 25 mph speed limit sign. Melissa Laube and Dan Amstutz noted that on Mystic St, there is 35 mph sign and then a 25 mph Town wide speed limit.

In response to a question from Shoji Takahashi, Wayne Chouinard responded that guidelines for the placement of speed limit signs are specific and carefully considered.

9. Update: Mt. Gilboa Traffic Concerns

Ray Jones informed TAC that the Working Group conducted a site visit on May 22 with about ten residents to hear their comments. Residents are concerned about vehicles speeding on Lowell St, particularly those coming from the Lexington direction, and the danger to pedestrians crossing Lowell St when the new playground at the Reservoir opens. This area has been examined by TAC in the past with recommendations made and some implemented.

Three main concerns were raised: (1) speeding on Lowell St; (2) four-way stop-sign compliance at Westmoreland Ave and Westminster Ave; (3) speeding at Downing Square.

A summary is being drafted which will include the previously recommended speed-feedback sign and RRFB as well as repainting lines; adding stop bars at Westmoreland Ave and Westminster Ave; and trimming tree branches that are obstructing signs. The Working Group will be requesting a traffic study to examine vehicle speeds on Westminster Ave. In the longer term, TAC can consider bump outs on Lowell St to reduce crossing distances.

Wayne Chouinard recommends submitting tree trimming to Town request website. DPW is 95% ready to put out pedestrian improvements to bid. The design of these Lowell St pedestrian safety improvements was about three years ago. Wayne Chouinard will put together a summary and timeline for the pedestrian improvements which can be provided to the residents near Lowell St.

Len Diggins pointed out that it is dangerous to cross on foot at Downing Square. Ray Jones spoke about the prior analysis of Downing Square and ideas to address the intersection. Howard Muise cautioned that the TAC had conducted extensive analysis of Downing Square a few years ago and concluded that none of the ideas are feasible. Wayne Chouinard agreed with the difficulty of the intersection.

10. Update: Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Dallin

Dan Amstutz summarized that Judy Crocker of MassDOT SRTS had developed an Arrival and Dismissal plan for Dallin Elementary School, which Dallin seeks to implement this school year. The changes include making George St one way away from Florence Ave; and closing to vehicle traffic (except for school buses) the section of Florence Ave immediately in front of Dallin during arrival and dismissal.

DPCD organized a meeting among APD, the Dallin Principal and Asst Principal, and Dan Amstutz and Laura Swan. One outcome of the meeting is that Dallin will be hosting a school meeting at the end of August with assistance of DPCD to engage with parents/guardians, abutters, and community. Community engagement will inform and address concerns of the abutters and neighborhood. The Arrival and Dismissal Plan will be for a trial basis with measures of success. Following the meeting, the proposal will be brought to the Select Board for approval on a trial basis.

Laura Swan added that APD's concerns are on cut-thru traffic (particularly through George St and Renfrew St). APD has said that it has enough traffic supervisors to assist with the proposed changes. Dallin School is very willing to reach out to abutters and neighborhood who might be affected by the changes in traffic patterns.

11. Open project list

(A) Possible 20-mph safety zone at Menotomy Rocks Park at the entrance on Jason St. Traffic counts were planned but were delayed due to COVID-19.

(B) Investigate possibility of crosswalk across Academy Street at Maple Street. Traffic counts were planned but delayed due to COVID-19. The Senior Center reopens in October.

Scott Smith mentioned that vehicle traffic volume might be back to pre-COVID levels, however, the traffic patterns seem different than before. He and others on the TAC think it is worthwhile to resume the traffic counts for the above projects.

12. TAC meeting format

TAC will continue remote meetings at least through next April, 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

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